

Heber Valley, Utah

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2031







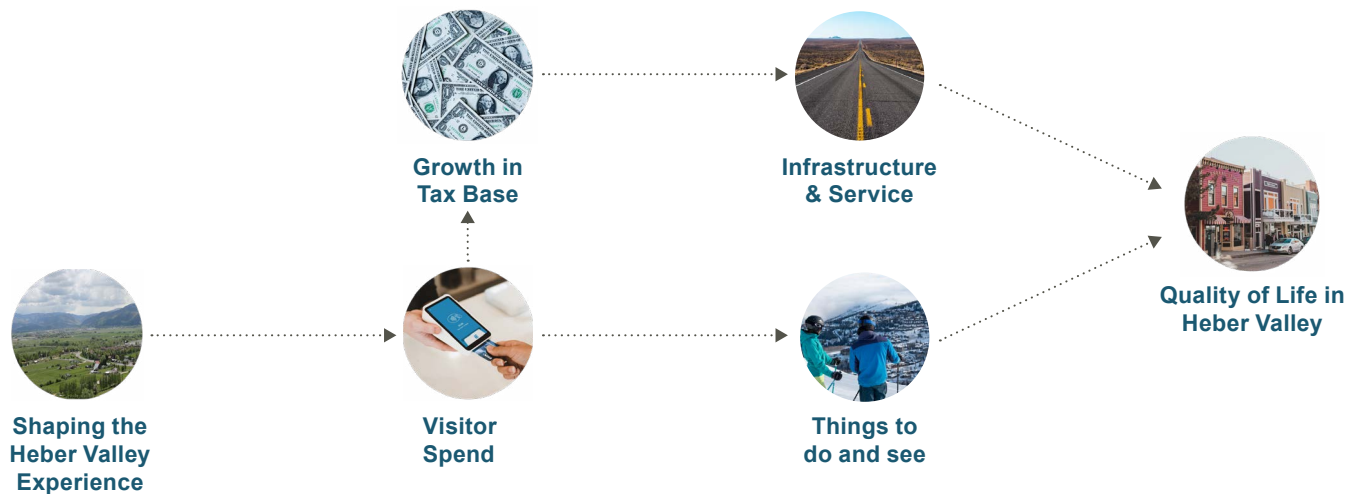
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Introduction

In Summer of 2020, a Destination Development planning group convened by the Utah Office of Tourism and the Heber Valley Tourism, Economic Development Office met for seven sessions to understand Heber Valley's visitors, describe the current-state visitor experience, envision the future-state visitor experience in 2031, identify Heber Valley's competitive position, identify key strategies to bring the envisioned future to life over three phases, and agree on a system for ongoing plan management. The contents of this document are rooted in the idea expressed in the following graphic, namely, that a deliberate shaping of the Heber Valley experience will result in a better quality of life for its residents.



How to Use This Plan

This plan contemplates a ten-year timeframe, ending in 2031, and begins with a Vision of what will be different in Heber Valley if we are successful in shaping a compelling destination and a thriving visitor economy. A Competitive Position is also identified, helping Heber Valley understand what it—uniquely—has to share with potential visitors (see page 8).

The work to be done is centered around 9 “Destination Imperatives”—those things that must be accomplished if the plan is to be successful. Each of these Imperatives is supported by a set of Destination Strategies that are distributed over three phases. There are 56 Destination Strategies overall. **Phase 1, Align** (page 12), covers the first three years of the plan and includes 24 strategies. **Phase 2, Develop** (page 18), covers years 4-6 and includes 20 strategies. **Phase 3, Expand** (page 24) covers years 7-10 and includes the final 12 strategies. While Heber Valley may work on several strategies at a time, each is denoted by a number that indicates the order in which they should be phased. The timeframes for the three phases are approximate but should serve as a guide to the major divisions of the work.

In order to ensure that our Destination Imperatives and Strategies track toward success, Heber Valley will form a Destination Collaborative dedicated to the implementation of this plan. The membership of the Destination Collaborative will need to be inclusive of a selection of stakeholders. (see [Collective Impact Model](#), page 28)

Regular meetings of the Destination Collaborative will track progress and—more importantly—identify opportunities for course correction. Small teams should be identified to undertake each of the strategies that are underway at a given time, and those teams should identify action steps necessary and how they will know when the strategy has been successful. They should regularly report on their progress to the Destination Collaborative.

This plan is not meant to be an inflexible to-do list. Rather, it should be thought of as the “best guess” for the work to be done over the coming ten years, but those assumptions should be tested regularly by the Destination Collaborative. At the five-year mark, a re-alignment meeting should be held to consider whether major course corrections are necessary, either due to unforeseen setbacks or due to more speedy accomplishment of the goals of the plan than was anticipated.



Heber Valley Vision - 2031

In 2031, Heber Valley will retain much of its current history and charm, while attracting travelers to extend their stay and enjoy its great and diverse outdoor amenities. New development in the area will bring elite outdoor adventurers to Heber Valley to ski and relax, with many mountains minutes away, including a brand new world class resort, Mayflower Mountain, immediately located in Wasatch County. At the same time, families—not just from the Wasatch Front and the Mountain West, but from across the United States—will seek out Heber Valley to experience its wide variety of outdoor adventures and unique experiences, accessible for all ages and interests. Nearby wilderness areas—the Strawberry and Uinta regions—will draw rugged outdoor adventurers to explore. The Heber Valley will be known to include the cities of Heber City and Midway as well as nearby communities around Jordanelle and the Strawberry Valley.

Heber Valley accommodations will grow to meet the future vision of travelers to the area. Current and future resorts will provide unbeatable places for traveling families and for those seeking a luxury experience to stay and play year-round. In partnership with Heber City, accommodations will also be located in the City's tourism hub to help provide excitement in a discrete area of town, where travelers can stay in the city, access nearby sites, eat, shop, and relax. Additional accommodations will also be developed to help support exploration in other areas, like the Jordanelle Basin and Strawberry Valley, with such assets in the Jordanelle Basin supporting the development of its tourism hub.

Heber Valley will capitalize on its location and grow dining options around farm-to-table that highlight local farmers and what they grow. Midway will continue to offer high-end tourism draws including cuisine, culture, and accommodations. The Valley will grow its reputation as a food destination and become a place for foodies to enjoy well-crafted cuisine. Further, the community will develop natural night life, offering something truly unique like moonlight snowshoeing and stargazing.

Heber Valley will continue to curate an events calendar designed to complement the Valley's assets, attract desired visitors, and help those visitors gain a greater awareness of all the Valley has to offer. Multi-day events will encourage longer stays, and tourism partners in the Valley will strategically utilize and activate existing gathering spaces for these events.

With a future Winter Olympics on the horizon, Heber Valley will once again become known throughout the world for both its adventure offerings and its charm. Soldier Hollow will be part of the future Olympic experience, and the rest of the Valley will be part of bucket-list itineraries for a wide variety of international visitors. Many destinations will continue to develop their assets to attract outdoor enthusiasts to come stay and play for longer.

Infrastructure will be refined to meet the needs of the local community and travelers alike. Walkability and bikeability will be enhanced, with expanded wayfinding and trails connections being made to provide for a more seamless experience. A local transit system will be developed to connect people and destinations. Travel partners will work with the local government to shape a parking strategy that meets the many needs of the community.

Heber Valley Tourism will refine its web presence to provide accurate and exciting travel information for its future visitors. In collaboration with tourism partners, new itineraries will be spotlighted to attract future travelers. Similarly, educational campaigns will be undertaken that talk about the value of tourism to the Valley and how it contributes to the local economy and overall quality of life. Having the year-round population understand and support tourism is a key attribute in successfully providing infrastructure that supports the local population and travelers alike.

Heber Valley will continue to craft a future for itself that retains its smaller-town charm while sharing its abundant natural bounty to visitors who linger and explore all it has to offer.





Competitive Position



Heber Valley offers bountiful outdoor experiences for families, rugged explorers, and elite adventurers alike. Visitors are attracted to:

- Abundant year-round outdoor experiences including: hiking, biking, boating, fishing, hunting, OHV, and skiing amenities
- A down-to-earth small town nestled into the beautiful Wasatch Mountains
- Top-notch, less-crowded skiing that rivals nearby overcrowded venues
- Unique experiences like the Homestead Crater, Midway Ice Castle, Heber Valley Railroad, and dark sky experiences
- Resorts that provide luxury accommodations and experiences
- Ease of access from Wasatch front and interstate highways

Visitor Profiles

Two visitor profiles were developed so that the full visitor journey could be explored through the lens of their experience. The visitor journey considered strengths and hard truths around planning, arrival, in-market experience, departure, and post-trip. The two profiles used are described below.

Visitor 1: Mountain Biker, 40 year-old female

Purpose

- From American Fork. Runs a non-profit. Travels to HV because it is convenient and the trails are uncrowded. Arrives via Subaru Outback with a Thule bike rack

Seeking

- Be on (mountain bike) trails, away from crowds, have a good beer, find a place to relax, have a bite to eat outside, sleep at a cabin in the park
- Alone time, seeking rejuvenation/fill back up her cup. Control her weight. Take in a beautiful place

Time Spent

- One overnight. two full days of mountain biking. Arrive Sat AM, ride, leave late Sun.

Our Offering

- Heber Valley Brewery; other outdoor dining; Fill-er-Up Coffee Station (or Dotties)
- Stays at the cabins at Wasatch State Park, or stays in her van
- Mountain bike shop
- All That Stuff in the Barn (for shopping)
- Fernway (caters to outdoor enthusiast)
- Soldier Hollow to try out an e-mountain bike to have a different/new mountain bike experience



| Highs | Lows |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Good access to information about mountain bike trails | Some trail information is outdated or incomplete |
| Enjoyed scenery on drive & on trail | Shops are busy and time slots are limited for rentals |
| Positive hygiene facilities at campground | Trail shuttles not readily available |
| Enjoyed e-bike rental; dined at bike-friendly establishment | Nightlife ends at 10PM |
| | Connectivity is lacking |

Visitor 2: Family; parents in early 30s, kids age 6, 3 and 1

Purpose

- Live in the Wasatch Front. Dad works in IT. Mom stays at home. They travel to escape the city and the heat. They travel by car (SUV)

Seeking

- Play in the water (pool, lake, crater); have physical activity; wear out the kids; have a new experience. Stay at a place like the Homestead or Zermatt. Eat ice cream, casual dining
- Have more quality time, presence, away from electronics and daily life; parents have pleasure of watching kids enjoy their lives

Time Spent

- Two nights

Our Offering

- Stay:** The Homestead
- Eat:** Cafe Galleria, Kohler Creamery, and Homestead Crater
- Activity:** HV Railroad; fish pond at Wasatch Mountain SP, Crater at Homestead, the Cheese Factory at the farm



| Highs | Lows |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Short, quick drive | Activities sold out; hotel overbooked |
| Great, beautiful place; calm & peaceful | Power poles disrupt views |
| Accommodations: smooth check-in; nice drive-through; indoor/outdoor pool; provided activities that aren't crowded; free concerts | Some attractions and dining crowded |
| Food & Beverage: unique dinner setting; live music; good food, service, and wine; easy breakfast; Parmesan fries at Lola's; lemon raspberry sweet roll at Midway Bakery | |
| Attractions are convenient; stocked fish pond; kids nap on train | |

Destination Imperatives

Expand Geography of Brand Awareness

- 1.1 Ensure Unity Around the Brand
- 1.2 Target Messaging Campaigns Based Upon Anticipated Travelers
- 1.3 Refresh Web Presence per Brand Direction
- 1.4 Partner with Heber Valley's Ski Industry to Build Our Ski Brand and Messaging
- 2.1 Refresh Print and Digital Collateral
- 3.1 Expand Media Buys into Expanded Target Geographies

Cultivate Local Support and Ambassadorship

- 1.5 Identify, Track and Address Reasons for Local Resistance for Tourism
- 1.6 Develop FAM Tours for Elected Officials and Residents
- 2.2 Develop Brand Ambassador Program
- 2.3 Develop Coordinated Communication Plan for Stakeholders and Residents
- 3.2 Develop Awards Program to Honor Local Tourism Advocates

Foster Collaboration in the Tourism Industry

- 1.7 Expand Collaboration with Federal, State, and Regional Partners
- 1.8 Create Opportunities for Local Businesses and Attractions to Cross-Promote
- 1.9 Increase Role of Tourism Tax Advisory Board to Advocate for More Funding and Collaboration Opportunities
- 2.4 Develop Opportunities for Cross-Training to Build Concierge Knowledge in Front-Line Tourism Workers
- 2.5 Expand/Accelerate Collaborative FAM Trips for Travel Trade and Media
- 3.3 Develop Awards Program to Honor Strong Collaborators

Grow Assets into Attractions

- 1.10 Quantify and Amplify Dark Skies Beneficial Impacts
- 1.11 Support the Development of Land-Based Adventures
- 1.12 Create Bundled Packages for Attractions
- 2.6 Consider Ways to Capitalize on Large Open Space
- 2.7 Develop Unique Nightlife
- 2.8 Promote a Unique Brand for Backcountry Areas and Sell Experience-Based Attractions to the Rugged Outdoors Market

- 2.9 Promote a Unique "Elite Adventurer" Brand to Sell Amenity-Based Attractions to an Upscale Market
- 3.4 Investigate the Viability of Development of Agritourism tourism

Develop Compelling Itineraries

- 1.13 Evolve Itineraries to Engage Newly-Focused Market Segments
- 1.14 Develop Different Itinerary Tracks for First-Time Visitors and Return Visitors
- 2.10 Seek Other Modes to Develop Itineraries for All Traveler Segments
- 2.11 Utilize Thematic Itineraries
- 3.5 Leverage Location Data and Other Inputs to Fine-Tune Itineraries for Target Markets

Foster Olympic Readiness

- 1.15 Improve Support Infrastructure for Large-Scale Events
- 1.16 Build Positive Public Sentiment for Elite Competitive Sports Events
- 1.17 Build a Partnership Coalition to Ensure Olympic Competitiveness, Readiness, and Positive Promotion
- 2.12 Identify Gaps and Opportunities Related to the Impact of Travel Volume on Community Resources
- 2.13 Identify and Implement Strategies to Increase the Number and Variety of Accommodation Offerings
- 3.6 Develop Volunteer Corps to Support Olympic Events
- 3.7 Develop Events and Activities Complementary to the Games
- 3.8 Create Legacy Branding to Preserve the Connection with the Olympics

Establish a Comprehensive Wayfinding System

- 1.18 Inventory Wayfinding Needs, Opportunities to Consolidate Signage, and Develop Implementation Plan
- 1.19 Identify Opportunities to Use Wayfinding to Shape Visitor Dispersal and Behavior
- 2.14 Develop an Equitable System to Allocate Wayfinding for Attractions
- 2.15 Ensure Consistency of Wayfinding Signage Style/Branding
- 3.9 Focus on Trail Wayfinding Needs for All Modes

Enhance Our Transportation Network

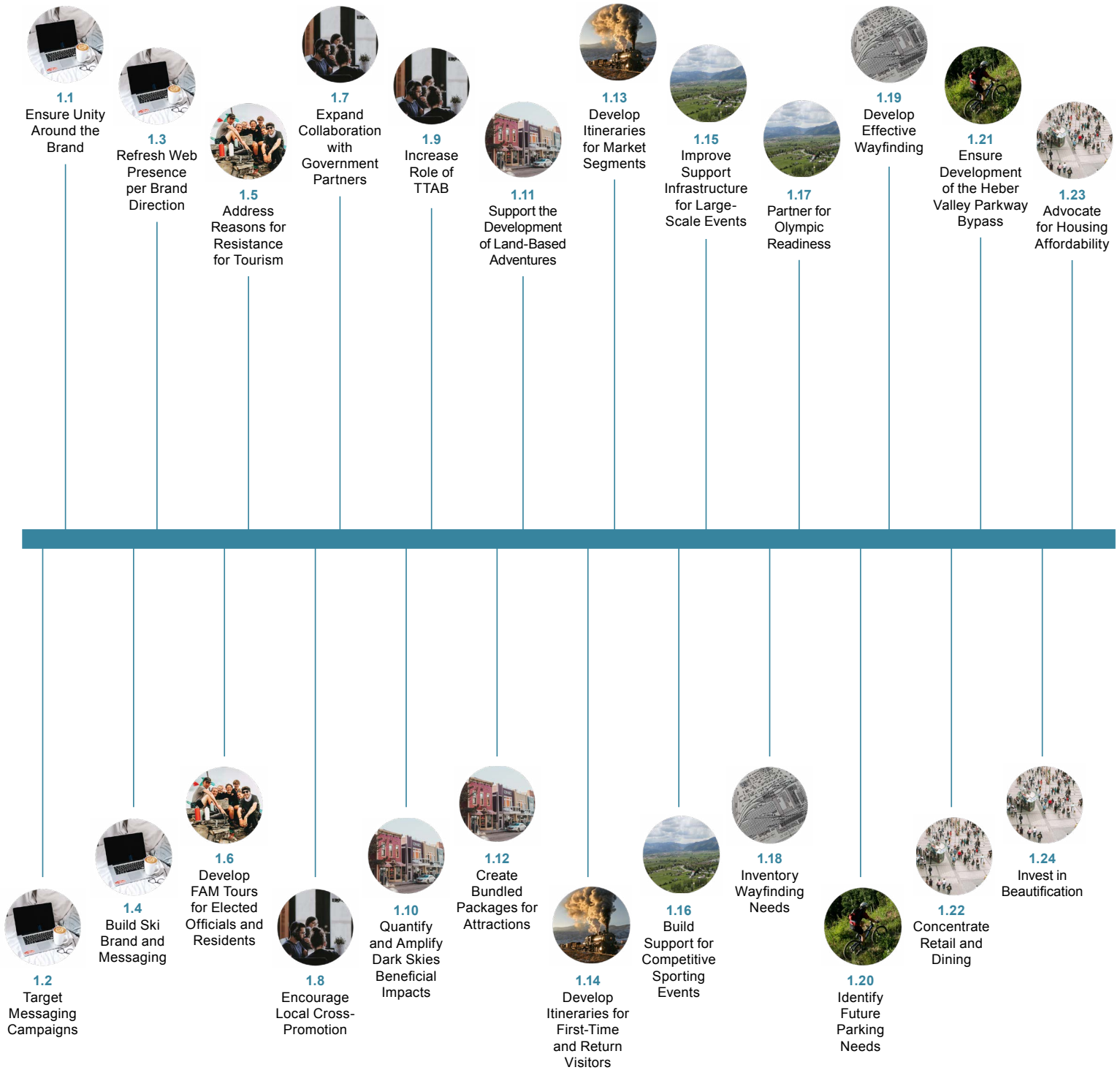
- 1.20** Develop an Inventory of Future Parking Needs and Advocate for Appropriate Development
- 1.21** Ensure Development of the Heber Valley Parkway Bypass
- 2.16** Enhance Walkability and Bikeability
- 2.17** Explore Options to Build Public Support and Funding for Expanded Transit Options
- 3.10** Develop Partnerships to Enhance Last-Mile Transportation Options During Olympics and Other Major Events

Partner on Placemaking Efforts

- 1.22** Influence the Clustering of Retail and Dining with a Gathering Plaza and Focus on History and Cultural Relevancy
- 1.23** Advocate for Housing Affordability
- 1.24** Invest in Beautification
- 2.18** Develop Year-Round and More Regular Programming
- 2.19** Partner with Arts and Cultural Organizations to Enhance Cultural Offerings
- 2.20** Identify Alternative Funding Sources and Incentives to Support and Implement Placemaking
- 3.11** Expand the Range of Culinary Experiences
- 3.12** Implement Traffic-Calming Measures in Primary Tourism Hubs



Align





Align

The first stage of Heber Valley's Destination Development plan is focused on establishing a unified foundation upon which subsequent actions may be launched with greater likelihood of success for the destination. These efforts are important as they present a cohesive vision of what the destination offers to its key marketing segments and works to align the many stakeholders in the Valley towards a common vision. While setting this foundation, Phase 1 also calls for continued action to keep strong tourism segments booming.

1.1 Ensure Unity Around the Brand

Heber Valley has been hard at work with HUB, a Portland-based branding and marketing agency, on building the Heber Valley brand and identifying the marketing strategy moving forward. Finalizing this work, sharing it, having broad buy-in, and implementing it across the Valley will be an important early win. The power of branding the many activities and destinations available in the Valley will promote greater recognition of the destination by travelers and create excitement about the Valley's future.

Partners: Local tourism partners

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.2 Target Messaging Campaigns Based Upon Anticipated Travelers

With branding of Heber Valley shaped with the help of HUB, messaging campaigns can be designed and implemented for the three primary traveling markets identified: Elite Outdoor Adventure, Families, and Rugged Adventurers. This strategy is designed to attract these target visitors in greater proportion to meet the goals of the tourism industry and the local community.

Partners: Utah Office of Tourism, tour agents, trip planners

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.3 Refresh Web Presence per Brand Direction

Care should be taken to ensure that Heber Valley's presence on the web reflects the new brand direction. Pertinent online content across platforms—the Go Heber Valley and Utah Office Of Tourism websites, Trip Advisor, Facebook, Instagram, etc.—should all promote and contain the renewed brand direction. Ensuring the Valley's tourism web assets and keywords are working to drive awareness of Heber Valley to target visitors will be key to successful implementation of the Destination Development Plan.

Partners: -

Resource Requirements: \$15,000

1.4 Partner with Heber Valley's Ski Industry to Build Our Ski Brand and Messaging

Heber Valley has a wealth of ski assets in and near the community: Soldier Hollow, Park City, Deer Valley,

and also the Mayflower coming online in the very near future. The Valley is poised to make its mark as a premier ski destination. Partnering with the ski industry to brand and promote the Valley and its assets will build a solid foundation in developing the destination and marketing it to two of its three target markets: families and elite outdoor adventurers.

Partners: Ski Utah, National Ski Association, National Ski Council Federation, area ski resorts

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.5 Identify, Track and Address Reasons for Local Resistance for Tourism

Many communities experience a tension between growing a tourism economy and losing the sense of place that locals know and love. It is important to maintain what makes the Valley special for those who call it home, while also strategically welcoming visitors. Go Heber Valley should work with local governments to track resident sentiment toward tourism and respond with education and/or appropriate modifications.

Partners: Tourism Advisory Board, City Councils, other government agencies

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.6 Develop FAM Tours for Elected Officials and Residents

To ensure that residents, elected officials, and other stakeholders understand the tourism economy and its offerings, FAMs may be organized to build awareness of the bountiful attractions. Growing the familiarity of tourism assets and community benefits within the local population will foster goodwill as the Destination Development plan is implemented and will create new relationships that further strengthen the community.

Partners: Local tourism industry partners

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.7 Expand Collaboration with Federal, State, and Regional Partners

Stakeholders in Heber Valley are already hard at work addressing concerns of the community such as traffic flow through downtown Heber City, and working with federal land-management agencies. Continuing the momentum and solid relationships already established will help activate new outdoor experiences in the future, a key to attracting desired tourism to the Valley.

Partners: Utah Office of Tourism, Park City, Mighty 5, other DMOs
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.8 Create Opportunities for Local Businesses and Attractions to Cross-Promote

To further strengthen the fabric of the local economy and tourism businesses, opportunities for cross-promotion should be explored and implemented. This will grow visitor awareness of local businesses and help distribute the in-market spend across a diversity of businesses. Cross-promotion also seeks to ensure that no one place in the Valley experiences over-tourism.

Partners: Local activities and outfitters
Resource Requirements: \$15,000

1.9 Increase Role of Tourism Tax Advisory Board to Advocate for More Funding and Collaboration Opportunities

The Tax Advisory Board plays a key role in allocating grant dollars throughout the community, with an eye towards a return on investment for tourism. The Board can play an enhanced role to bring local partners to the table, cultivate collaboration opportunities, and advocate for more funding to further promote and grow tourism in the Valley. As visitation grows, the taxes collected then redistributed as grants will also grow, spurring investment in the tourism industry for years to come.

Partners: Tourism Tax Advisory Board, Wasatch County government
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.10 Quantify and Amplify Dark Skies Beneficial Impacts

Heber Valley has expansive access to dark skies, offering unparalleled views of the Milky Way. This unique asset should be further explored to see how it can be leveraged—both by having the Valley be certified by the International Dark Sky Association and by having local attractions explore how they can use this asset to expand their offerings. As an example, Valley resorts could offer moonlight snowshoeing and stargazing parties.

Partners: Local governments, residents, State Parks
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.11 Support the Development of Land-Based Adventures

While many adventures are clearly offered, there are opportunities to develop new ways of engaging with the great outdoors, and to distribute visitation beyond the reservoir. Creating new adventures may entice some visitors to stay longer in market to explore more and become increasingly intimate with the diversity of the Valley's assets.

Partners: Non-water tourism industry partners
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.12 Create Bundled Packages for Attractions

Bundling attractions is an easy way to curate a visit. It also allows the Valley to pair a strongly-performing attraction with an up-and-coming attraction to raise the profile of the latter. Bundles allow visitors to better understand options and plan their visit. Creating bundles may drive visitation to desired locations, disperse visitors, and maximize economic impact—contributing to the tourism trajectory desired by the community.

Partners: Tourism industry partners
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.13 Evolve Itineraries to Engage Newly-Focused Market Segments

Heber Valley's new branding focuses on three segments: Elite Outdoor Adventurers, Families, and Rugged Adventurers. With this clear focus, existing itineraries may evolve to speak directly to these market segments. The refined focus, with an eye towards extending in-market stays, will help the Valley achieve its goals of growing economic impact through duration rather than increasing number of visitors.

Partners: Utah Office of Tourism, local tourism industry partners
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.14 Develop Different Itinerary Tracks for First-Time Visitors and Return Visitors

There is much in Heber Valley to attract people to visit for the first time—nearby trails, mountain biking, Soldier Hollow, one-of-a-kind attractions, skiing. Repeat visitors may look to enjoy those experiences, but also be on the lookout for the yet-to-be-discovered offerings. Itineraries may be developed for targeted to each of these groups. This empowers the Valley to continue to support the tried-and-true attractions while also promoting new and unusual offerings to visitors, and thus broaden the economic impact of visitors throughout the destination.

Partners: Utah Office of Tourism, local tourism industry partners
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.15 Improve Support Infrastructure for Large-Scale Events

With Salt Lake City having been host to the 2002 Winter Olympics, Heber Valley is no stranger to the infrastructure needs of large-scale events. And with Salt Lake City being considered for the 2030 Winter Olympics, the needs to support a larger-scale event is likely. The communities in the Valley and throughout the greater region will need to focus on supporting infrastructure investments to make such a large-scale event viable, looking at systems such as transit, parking, transportation and public restrooms.

Partners: Transportation providers, local governments, Soldier Hollow

Resource Requirements: TBD

1.16 Build Positive Public Sentiment for Elite Competitive Sports Events

While Heber Valley may be poised to host some events of the 2030 Olympics, not everyone in the community is prepared to welcome the influx and disruption that such an event would bring. Regardless of whether the Olympics return to Utah, hosting elite competitive sporting events is a viable economic strategy for the region. Efforts should be taken to share the value of such events and identify what the community gains from them. Having positive public sentiment toward these events will create an inviting atmosphere to the community, bring greater tourism dollars in, and raise the profile of the community on the national and international stage.

Partners: Soldier Hollow

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.17 Build a Partnership Coalition to Ensure Olympic Competitiveness, Readiness, and Positive Promotion

Salt Lake City is being considered to host the 2030 Olympics, and if past is prologue, Heber Valley will be the host community for some of the events. Establishing a partnership coalition now—which would have responsibilities to promote, anticipate needs, and ensure the Valley is a competitive partner to host events—will enhance the likelihood that the Olympics will indeed come back to Utah. Securing the Olympics and hosting travelers from throughout the world will bring a significant influx of tourism-related dollars and investment to the community.

Partners: Utah Sports Commission, IOC, National Olympic & Paralympic Committee, national governing bodies for sports, corporate sponsors, Soldier Hollow

Resource Requirements: TBD

1.18 Inventory Wayfinding Needs, Opportunities to Consolidate Signage, and Develop Implementation Plan

Currently, there is inconsistent wayfinding and signage in the Valley. Wayfinding between communities varies in its style, and wayfinding within a specific system (i.e. hiking trails, biking routes) is incomplete. The Valley

has attractions that would appeal to visitors, but they are not readily apparent or easily found. Developing an inventory of the existing wayfinding throughout the Valley for various modes and for a breadth of destinations in a logical first step in keeping visitors in-market, engaged in the community, and exploring for longer.

Partners: Local governments, active transportation partners, UDOT
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.19 Identify Opportunities to Use Wayfinding to Shape Visitor Dispersal and Behavior

As part of the wayfinding inventory and subsequent implementation, the wayfinding system could strategically place waypoints to direct visitors to assets dispersed throughout the Valley. Doing so could ensure that no one place becomes over-visited, and that the traveling public has greater awareness of the bounty of the Valley's assets. Dispersing visitors through the Valley will also distribute the economic benefits of the visitor economy.

Partners: -

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.20 Develop an Inventory of Future Parking Needs and Advocate for Appropriate Development

In partnership with Heber City, parking inventories should be undertaken to better understand where parking is available in relation to assets and attractions. This information will help inform strategic action to address gaps and to develop creative solutions to help get people around the community when driving/parking is less viable.

Partners: Local governments, affected businesses

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.21 Ensure Development of the Heber Valley Parkway Bypass

There is currently no bypass around Heber City, meaning that truck traffic cuts through the middle of town. This type of traffic is not conducive to creating the sense of a safe, walkable town in which visitors would want to linger. Working with partners to ensure the development of the bypass will make the downtown more inviting.

Heber Valley will work with local partners such as the Community Alliance for Main Street, Heber City, and local businesses to ensure that downtown becomes a destination which directs visitors and residents to the city core to visit, eat, and spend time. Care should be taken to ensure appropriate traffic continues to be directed into the city core to visit, eat, and spend some time.

Partners: EIS stakeholders

Resource Requirements: TBD

1.22 Influence the Clustering of Retail and Dining with a Gathering Plaza and Focus on History and Cultural Relevancy

A key component of placemaking is having a sufficient concentration of uses in an area to enhance its vitality. Clustering uses such as shops and restaurants is one such way of cultivating this kind of vibrancy. Additional public amenities, such as plazas, benches, and public art further enhance placemaking efforts. Travelers often seek out such places to enjoy, linger, people-watch, and get to know the community.

Partners: Local governments, affected businesses

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.23 Advocate for Housing Affordability

A growing tourism industry and expanding economy can result in increases to cost of living above and beyond those the Valley is already experiencing, while a supply-side pressures may also contribute to the increase of housing prices. Ensuring housing affordability will be critical to keeping a vibrant workforce, thereby ensuring a sustainable destination and local quality of life.

Partners: Local governments, local housing authority

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

1.24 Invest in Beautification

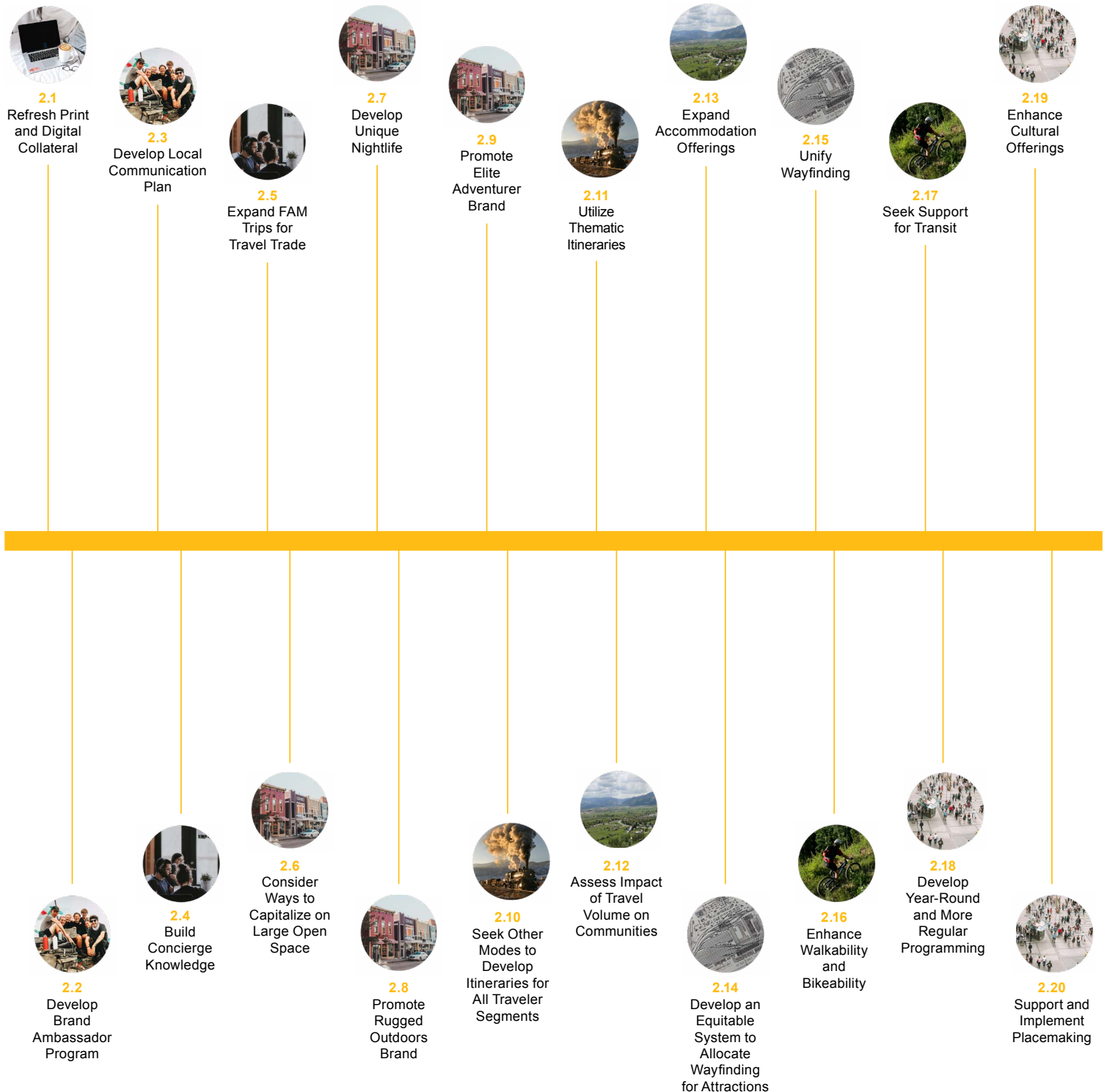
Heber Valley will want to initiate work in beautification of the community early in the Destination Development timeline. This is a foundational investment in creating a welcoming sense of place in which travelers will want to linger. Funding beautification efforts may be done in concert with local governments, the Tourism Tax Advisory Board, and local business associations. Having a broad coalition of stakeholders investing in beautification will help distribute the risk and reward throughout the community.

Partners: Local governments, affected businesses

Resource Requirements: \$10,000/year



Develop





Develop

By now, Heber Valley should be seeing some tangible changes in visitation and increased excitement from residents on the potentials of tourism as an industry. Phase 2 is about maintaining that momentum, being smart about marketing and communications, preparing for continued evolution, and taking collective action as a destination.

2.1 Refresh Print and Digital Collateral

As the marketing and branding gains traction with potential visitors and visitation to the region increases, print and digital collateral should be reviewed and updated accordingly. A few years put into Destination Development efforts should illuminate what parts of the marketing strategy are working well, where there are gaps, and what could be done to affect positive change in alignment with the goals of this plan.

Partners: -

Resource Requirements: \$30,000

2.2 Develop Brand Ambassador Program

A destination is only great so long as its residents value tourism. Identifying opportunities to educate the local community on the potential economic impacts and benefits of focusing on tourism as an industry is an important step in creating motivated ambassadors. Doing this, while also balancing stewardship of the local quality of life, will help create the pro-tourism environment required to capitalize effectively on existing visitors and incentivize locals to think about their businesses as being tourism-ready. This will be especially important as the word gets out about Heber Valley's attractions and less-populated outdoor experiences, and more people come to the Valley for leisure travel.

Partners: Local tourism industry partners

Resource Requirements: \$20,000

2.3 Develop Coordinated Communication Plan for Stakeholders and Residents

A key goal of Heber Valley's Destination Development plan is to consider and balance the needs of the tourism economy and the desires of the local community. To achieve balance, a coordinated communication plan should be developed and executed that provides information on the growth of the Valley's tourism industry, and what steps are being taken to ensure balance. Doing so will empower residents to be part of the Destination Development journey and provide greater support for the steps being taken to grow the local visitor economy.

Partners: Local tourism industry partners

Resource Requirements: \$30,000

2.4 Develop Opportunities for Cross-Training to Build Concierge Knowledge in Front-Line Tourism Workers

Collaboration and coordination should be realized across all hospitality-oriented businesses in the Valley to help promote all the attractions and assets that may be offered. This cross-promotional effort should help drive traffic and create lift in market by ensuring that all assets are collaboratively promoted. This will also work to help keep tourists in market longer, thus contributing more to the visitor economy.

Partners: Local tourism industry partners

Resource Requirements: \$15,000

2.5 Expand/Accelerate Collaborative FAM Trips for Travel Trade and Media

With the solid foundation community support established in the first phase of the Destination Development plan, the Valley is well-poised to share what it has to offer to travel trade and media, especially those from destinations that may be further away and help cultivate a fly market—New York, California, Washington, Texas, etc. Sharing all the Valley has to offer with representatives from these areas will be a positive step in bringing out-of-state visitors—who will stay longer in market—to the Valley.

Partners: Local tourism industry partners

Resource Requirements: \$15,000

2.6 Consider Ways to Capitalize on Large Open Space

While there is significant programming and activity in the mountains surrounding Heber Valley, there is nearby open area that has yet to see as much activity. Creative thinking may be applied to find ways to use these open spaces and craft new land-based adventures, such as land windsurfing or adding boardwalks along our rivers. These activities—along with established in-town, mountain, and rugged outdoors adventure—can then be used to expand the adventure offerings marketed to the travelling public.

Partners: Park providers

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.7 Develop Unique Nightlife

Heber Valley has an opportunity to cultivate a unique nightlife experience that does not rely on bars, dancing, and music. Rather, the Valley and its residents realize that its access to Dark Skies provides an extremely unique experience in the evening/night. Providing evening activities opens a destination to additional demographic groups, promotes longer stays, and allows for a higher daily spend by visitors. Heber Valley and its tourism-oriented businesses can explore how to capitalize on this opportunity by tailoring unique experiences.

Partners: Resorts, affected businesses, outdoor & park providers
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.8 Promote a Unique Brand for Backcountry Areas and Sell Experience-Based Attractions to the Rugged Outdoors Market

Heber Valley is positioned as a launch point to rugged outdoor adventures to the east and south. Creating a brand unique to this experience will be beneficial for attracting such adventurers to the Valley and beyond. The messaging that will resonate with this target market will differ from the messaging for other markets, and will help potential visitors understand what the Valley and nearby areas have to offer.

Partners: Outfitters, trail groups, guides
Resource Requirements: \$15,000

2.9 Promote a Unique “Elite Adventurer” Brand to Sell Amenity-Based Attractions to an Upscale Market

One of the target markets of the Destination Development plan is elite outdoor adventurers. Promoting attractions and assets that this group would find appealing is an avenue to grow the tourism economy. Promotions could focus on upscale ski experiences, spa offerings, upscale dining, and guided excursions in the backcountry. Promoting these attractions together is an easy way to curate a visit, understand options, and entice a visitor to stay longer.

Partners: Resorts, restaurants, retail, Soldier Hollow
Resource Requirements: \$15,000

2.10 Seek Other Modes to Develop Itineraries for All Traveler Segments

With tailored itineraries developed as described in the plan, care should be taken to craft itineraries that reach beyond these targeted market segments. As with all itinerary development, these create greater destination understanding in the visitor and allows them to more clearly see what they may enjoy in market.

These can also be used to help boost up-and-coming Valley attractions and assets by dispersing visitor traffic throughout the destination.

Partners: Influencers, crowd sourcing, famous people, Utah Office of Tourism, Ski Utah
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.11 Utilize Thematic Itineraries

Many people travel with a specific experience in mind: biking, hiking, history, or river adventure. Developing themed itineraries that address these interests will make the Valley a more appealing destination for the demographics who enjoy those activities. This also empowers the Valley to group high-draw attractions with lesser-known attractions, and distribute visitation across the landscape.

Partners: Local businesses and notable figures as needed by theme
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.12 Identify Gaps and Opportunities Related to the Impact of Travel Volume on Community Resources

Heber Valley can be proactive when thinking about the impact tourism has on infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste management, roads, etc.). With a few years of growth under its belt, the region will have a good idea of its visitor growth rate and the potential constraints that could place on existing infrastructure. Planning and investing now for future growth will ensure that infrastructure keeps up with future demand.

Partners: Local businesses
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.13 Identify and Implement Strategies to Increase the Number and Variety of Accommodation Offerings

Heber Valley has a few known hotels and resorts—including the Zermatt and the Homestead—which attract current visitors. The Mayflower, coming online in the next few years, will draw additional people to the Valley. Heber Valley should consider the range of its accommodations and seek to expand it to meet a changing visitor profile. This may mean different types of accommodations in town and creating accommodations in further-flung areas to accommodate visitors who wish to stay off the beaten path.

Partners: Accommodation partners
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.14 Develop an Equitable System to Allocate Wayfinding for Attractions

Once a wayfinding inventory has been crafted in Phase 1, an equitable system for addressing wayfinding needs will need to be crafted. The system for wayfinding allocation should be done in a way that directs visitors to a rich diversity of experiences, treats local businesses equitably, meets the most pressing wayfinding needs, and ensures that the entire region benefits from this new investment.

Partners: Local businesses

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.15 Ensure Consistency of Wayfinding Signage Style/Branding

Building off the wayfinding and branding efforts in Phase 1, the implementation of a wayfinding system should maintain a consistent style throughout the Valley. Having a consistent style for signage will provide a sense of consistency and predictability for the visitor as they quickly learn what types of signs to look for to get to their destinations.

Partners: -

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.16 Enhance Walkability and Bikeability

Enhancing the walkability and bikeability in Heber City and Midway will provide a more pleasant experience for visitors as they explore these downtown cores. Further, this will bring people closer to storefronts and restaurant fronts, making visitor spend more likely. Not only do these investments make downtown more inviting to visitors, but they will likely encourage residents to engage and support their local businesses as they also take advantage of walkable/bikeable investments in the community.

Partners: Active transportation representatives, developers, trail builders

Resource Requirements: \$30,000

2.17 Explore Options to Build Public Support and Funding for Expanded Transit Options

There is currently no transit service within Heber City. For a visitor, this means that they must arrive by car—either their own or a rental vehicle. Further, getting around the Valley also must be done by private vehicles. Exploration of transit options would provide an alternative to this. Further, exploring and moving on this prior to the potential 2030 Olympics would enable the Valley to offer transit during this critical visitation surge.

Partners: Active local government, residents

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.18 Develop Year-Round and More Regular Programming

People are informing themselves today through social media and digital research. By creating year-round events and programming in public places such as plazas, town squares, and downtown, the amount of Heber Valley social media content will increase, enhancing the reach as a destination, and thus drive new visitation to Valley assets.

Partners: Affected local businesses, Community Alliance for Main Street, Midway Boosters

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.19 Partner with Arts and Cultural Organizations to Enhance Cultural Offerings

While there are a few art and cultural offerings in Heber Valley, this segment of the travel industry could be enhanced to meet growing visitor interest. Currently, these assets attract families and some elite visitors. Creating itineraries will assist visitors in engaging with these experiences. Further, partnering with the existing art and cultural organizations in the Valley to expand and enhance offerings will grow the supply of this type of attraction as travel demand increases.

Partners: Affected local businesses, Arts Council

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

2.20 Identify Alternative Funding Sources and Incentives to Support and Implement Placemaking

While the efforts in Phase 1 and 2 of this Destination Development Plan will attract more visitors to Heber Valley, efforts will need to be taken to fund placemaking investments to ensure these places meet visitors' expectations. Alternative funding sources for placemaking should be explored, such as revolving loans, small business grants, matching grants, or forming a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID).

Partners: Utah Office of Tourism, economic development partners

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000



Expand



3.1
Expand
Media
Buys into
Expanded
Target
Geographies



3.3
Develop
Awards
Program to
Honor Strong
Collaborators



3.5
Use Location
Data to
Fine-Tune
Itineraries



3.7
Develop Events
and Activities
Complementary
to the Games



3.9
Focus on Trail
Wayfinding
Needs for All
Modes



3.11
Expand the
Range of
Culinary
Experiences



3.2
Develop
Awards
Program
for Local
Advocates



3.4
Investigate
the Viability of
Development
of Agritourism



3.6
Develop
Volunteer Corps
to Support
Olympic Events



3.8
Create
Olympic
Legacy
Branding



3.10
Address
Last-Mile
Transportation
for Major Events



3.12
Implement
Traffic-Calming
Measures
in Primary
Tourism Hubs



Expand

By now the destination should be growing in alignment with the goals of this plan. Targeted visitors should be coming to the Valley and staying longer. Itineraries targeted to these populations should be demonstrating their utility in highlighting key destinations, dispersing visitors, and helping to bring new assets into the mix. Destination Strategies in Phase 3 aim to solidify these experiences and continue to grow the value of tourism to the community.

3.1 Expand Media Buys into Expanded Target Geographies

As Heber Valley enters Phase 3 of its Destination Development Plan, media buys in target markets should increase. These should continue to be tailored to market segments—families, elite outdoor travelers, and rugged adventurers—and in feeder markets that support multi-day visitation as envisioned. The work in Phase 2 will have continued to cultivate Heber Valley's assets and attractions to continue to be in alignment and desirable to these populations.

Partners: Ski Utah, Utah Office of Tourism, Mayflower Mountain, airports, airlines
Resource Requirements: TBD

3.2 Develop Awards Program to Honor Local Tourism Advocates

To encourage local support of tourism, an awards program may be crafted to recognize the efforts and contributions of those in the industry. These types of programs are a great way to showcase the work, service, creativity and contributions of individuals related to tourism promotion and bring continued excitement and interest to the local tourism industry.

Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Advisory Board, Heber Valley Economic Development Board
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.3 Develop Awards Program to Honor Strong Collaborators

In addition to an awards program to honor local tourism advocates, a similar program may be crafted to honor strong collaborators. It is a way to elevate the status of the local tourism industry and promote collaboration as an effective, efficient and creative approach. Having such an award will signify the value of collaboration as Heber Valley continues to develop the destination.

Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Advisory Board, Heber Valley Economic Development Board
Resource Requirements: TBD

3.4 Investigate the Viability of Development of Agritourism

Heber Valley is home to a few agritourism-related assets. It is unclear if there are enough attractions in the Valley to develop a specific agritourism focus that would distinguish the Valley from other areas, and a deeper investigation is warranted.

Partners: Agricultural community, restaurant association
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.5 Leverage Location Data and Other Inputs to Fine-Tune Itineraries for Target Markets

By this time in the Destination Development Plan execution, Heber Valley should be seeing increased stays by people in their target markets. The Valley can leverage location data for travelers when they are in market to better understand how they move through the community and compare where they go to what is marketed. Adjustments may then be made to respond to the reality of how travelers interact with the Valley.

Partners: Co-op for DMOs with Utah Office of Tourism for data purchasing
Resource Requirements: TBD

3.6 Develop Volunteer Corps to Support Olympic Events

The host of the 2030 Winter Olympics will be announced in 2023, and by this time in the Destination Development Plan execution, Heber Valley will know if it, along with other communities near Salt Lake City, will be host. If the Olympics are hosted in Utah, Heber Valley will be busy with preparing to welcome so many individuals and events to its community. A local effort will need to be undertaken to organize and deploy volunteers in the community in support of the Games.

Additional efforts may also be identified where the local community wishes to organize and engage with the Olympics to ensure the local voice is present in shaping the Games.

Partners: Local residents
Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.7 Develop Events and Activities Complementary to the Games

Assuming the 2030 Olympic Games are coming to Salt Lake City and surrounding areas, Heber Valley is well-positioned to continue to host some of the games, building off existing infrastructure and incorporating new assets. The presence of international visitors is a fantastic opportunity to share more of what makes Heber Valley special. The Valley can develop unique events and activities that complement the Games, and offer visitors more ways to engage in, and stay in the community for longer, increasing visitor spending in the market.

Partners: Local businesses

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.8 Create Legacy Branding to Preserve the Connection with the Olympics

An Olympic event makes a tremendous impact on its host community, bringing lasting benefits that change a community. As an example, the population growth Heber Valley has experienced began with the 2002 Winter Olympics. Being mindful of this impact and planning for this by considering legacy branding allows Heber Valley to leverage the Olympic Games long after the closing ceremony and channel some of that energy in alignment with community goals and values.

Partners: Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.9 Focus on Trail Wayfinding Needs for All Modes

Having established a common pattern language for wayfinding and erecting new signage at key points, the next logical step is to take that effort and extend it further into the destination. Wayfinding—both digital and physical—should be established for the many non-highway modes of transportation (walking, biking, skiing, OHV). Wayfinding within each network—such as mountain biking trails—can be established and made uniform to bring a greater ability by the traveler to engage and explore the destination. Providing reliable signage will bring greater comfort to visitors, help to keep visitors in market, drive Valley asset awareness, and increase visitor spending.

Partners: Trail user representatives

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.10 Develop Partnerships to Enhance Last-Mile Transportation Options During Olympics and Other Major Events

Many of the efforts of this Destination Development Plan address transportation gaps, and advocate for multimodal approaches to exploring the destination. If transit does become a reality in the Valley, it should be noted that transit stops may not be “at the door” of a destination, but a short distance away. Considering and planning for how people will get from the stop to the door will provide a more seamless experience for visitors and provide them the assurance that their journey has been considered. This will become increasingly important during the Olympics as there will be a significant influx of visitors to the Valley who may be visiting without a vehicle.

Partners: -

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.11 Expand the Range of Culinary Experiences

While there are a number of very good local dining experiences in Heber Valley, there is also an opportunity to leverage the community’s proximity to farming communities and expand culinary offerings. Growing farm-to-table experiences and bringing locally cultivated crops to nearby restaurants is one way the Valley can capitalize on the interest and bring an economic benefit to restaurants and agricultural partners.

Partners: Restaurant association

Resource Requirements: <\$10,000

3.12 Implement Traffic-Calming Measures in Primary Tourism Hubs

By this point, visitation will have increased, and in-market amenities will have expanded to include new restaurants, shops, and attractions. More travelers may be experiencing downtowns in Heber City and Midway on foot. Ensuring vehicular traffic in these downtown cores is calm will provide a more inviting experience for visitors. With the more pleasant experience, visitors will stay in market longer, increasing their spend and support of local businesses.

Partners: Cities, county, UDOT

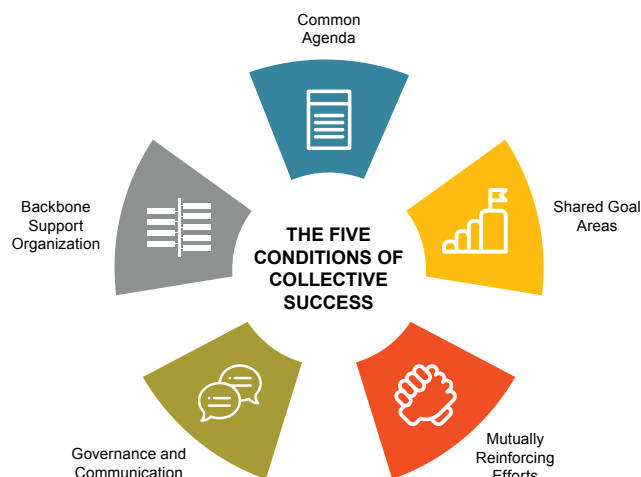
Resource Requirements: TBD

IMPLEMENTATION:

Collective Impact Model

Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. The approach of collective impact is placed in contrast to “isolated impact,” where organizations primarily work alone to solve social problems. —Wikipedia

The Collective Impact Model will form the basis for ongoing management of the Plan. The convening (or “backbone”) organization—a Destination Collaborative comprised of both Heber Valley Tourism staff and the Heber Valley Tourism and Economic Development Board—will ensure that all of the necessary representatives come together on a regular basis to share progress, course-correct, and strategize next steps. It is important to note that the Destination Collaborative’s role is limited to that of a convener—they are not the primary decision-maker and have no higher standing than other participants in the process.



Shared Goal Areas

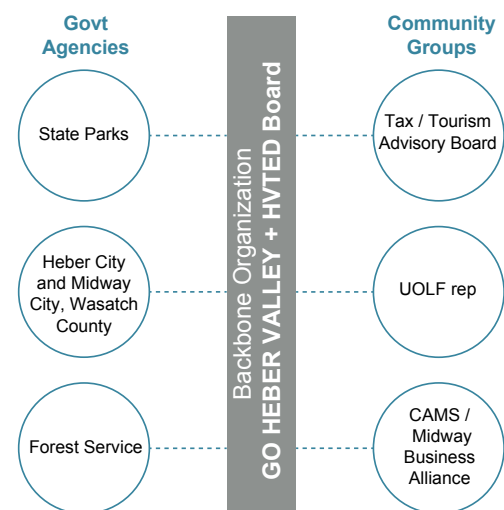
The Shared Goals for the Heber Valley Destination Development Plan are the nine Destination Imperatives:

1. Expand Geography of Brand Awareness
2. Cultivate Local Support and Ambassadorship
3. Foster Collaboration in the Tourism Industry
4. Grow Assets into Attractions
5. Develop Compelling Itineraries
6. Foster Olympic Readiness
7. Establish a Comprehensive Wayfinding System
8. Enhance Our Transportation Network
9. Partner on Placemaking Efforts

Participants should include representatives of the following municipalities and organizations, at a minimum:

- Heber City
- Midway City
- Wasatch County
- Utah State Parks
- US Forest Service
- Tax & Tourism Advisory Board
- Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation
- CAMS / Midway Business Alliance

Backbone Support Organization



Continuous Communication

Initial Actions

- Meet every other month for at least the first 6 months, then reassess

Important Shifts

- Increased engagement/participation
- Increased advocacy/liaison to community/civic groups

Year One Meeting Cadence

- Destination Collaborative convenes every other month meeting
- Strategy-level task forces or teams to convene as needed, at a more frequent cadence than the Destination Collaborative

After year one, the group should align on frequency of meetings to ensure sufficient momentum. Annual, formal progress reports to elected officials with a public audience is also recommended.



Acknowledgements



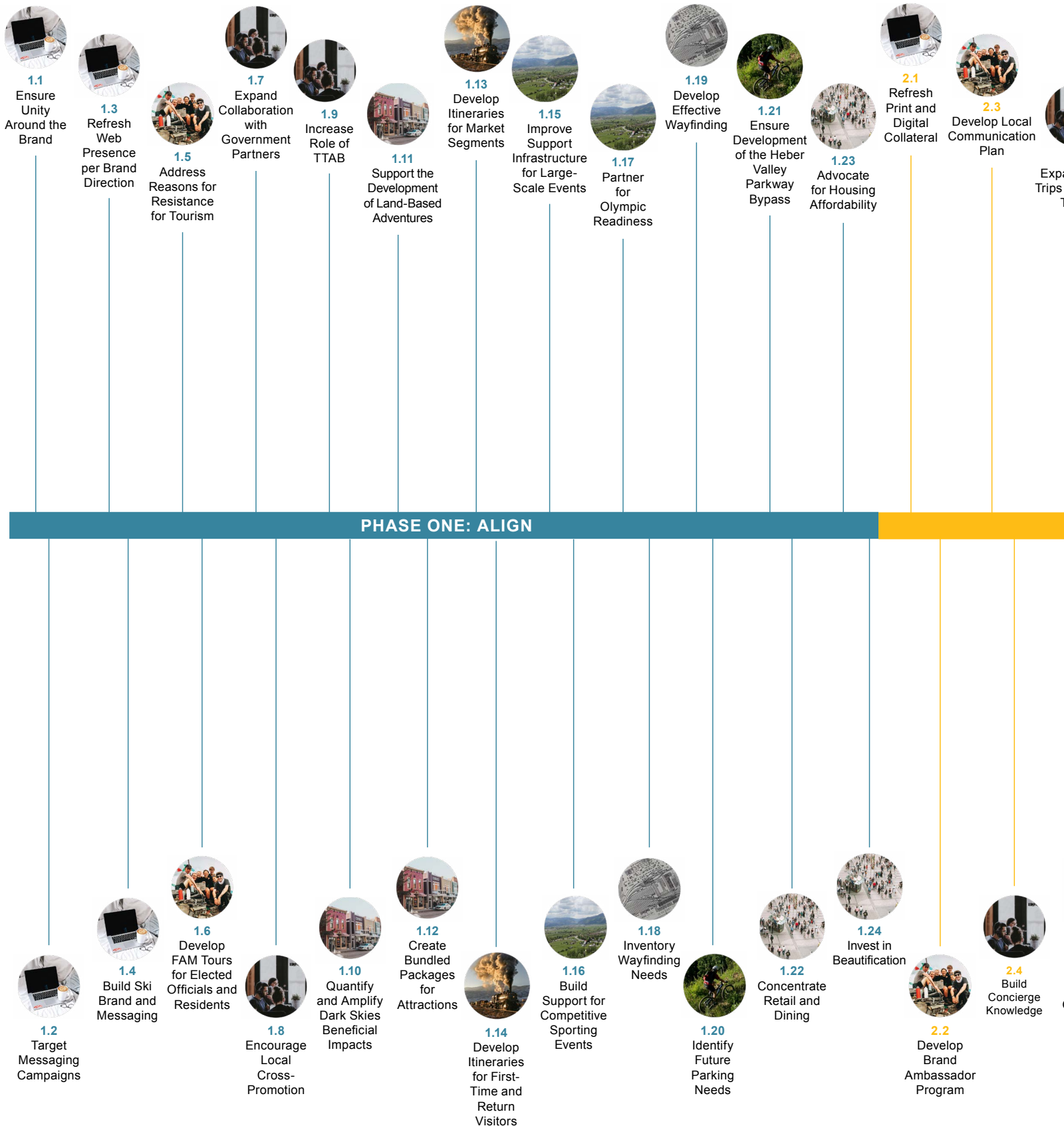
Destination Development Planning Team:

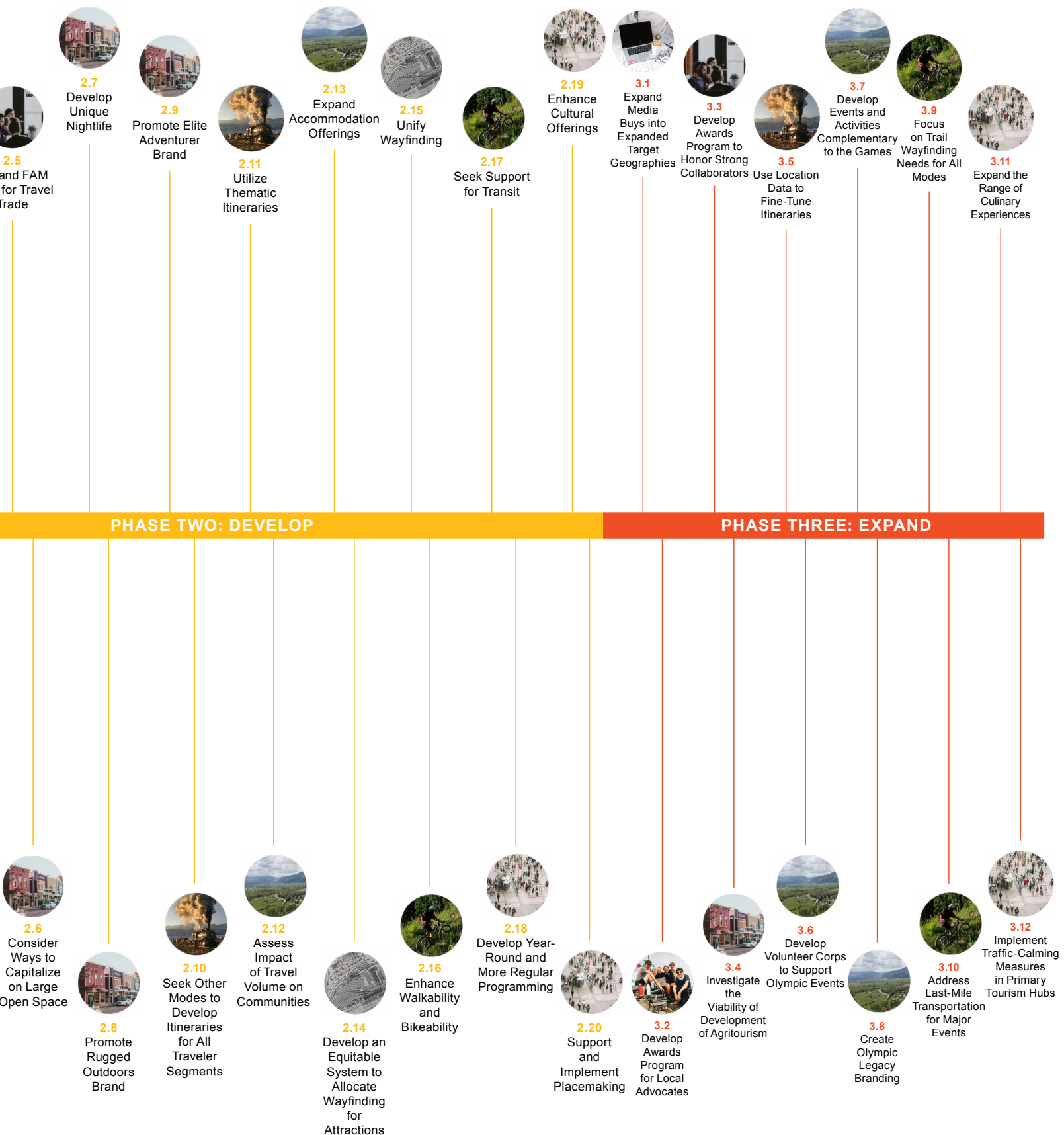
- **Dallin Koecher**, Heber Valley Tourism and Economic Development
- **Jessica Broadhead**, Heber Valley Tourism and Economic Development
- **Laurie Backus**, Utah State Parks
- **Ashley Burr**, Military Installation Development Authority
- **Perry Dickson**, Business Owner, Slim and Knobby's Bike Shop
- **Dustin Grabau**, Wasatch County
- **Mike Hilbig**, The Homestead Resort
- **Brooke Hontz**, Extell Development
- **Maxine Jensen**, Zermatt Resort
- **Rachel Kahler**, Heber City Council
- **Jennifer McCulloch**, Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation
- **Martin McCallister**, The Homestead Resort
- **Mark Nelson**, Wasatch County Council
- **Lisa Orme**, Midway City Council
- **Cameron Phillips**, Strawberry Bay Marina
- **Craig Simmons**, The Homestead Crater
- **Tom Stone**, Community Alliance for Main Street
- **Bianca Lyon**, Utah Office of Tourism
- **Flint Timmons**, Utah Office of Tourism
- **Stacy Humphrey**, Associate Principal, Coraggio Group
- **Matthew Landkamer**, Principal, Coraggio Group



Heber Valley, Utah

2031 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN







Coraggio Group | 503.493.1452 | coraggiogroup.com